



## **“Making a difference”**

### **2009-12 PLAN DRAFT 12.0 27/01/09**

‘Please see attached Passenger Focus’ draft plan for 2009-12. I hope it is self-explanatory. If you have any comments or questions please contact me, Anthony Smith on 0370 336 6010 or at [Anthony.smith@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:Anthony.smith@passengerfocus.org.uk). We would really appreciate comments by February 27 2009.’

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## 1. Chairman's Introduction

This plan sets out the main direction of travel for Passenger Focus, the independent passenger watchdog, from 2009 to 2012. Passenger Focus's approach of making a difference and getting the best deal for passengers, driven by research, will remain.

However, we are taking on new and exciting roles. Subject to final parliamentary approval, we will start to represent bus, coach and tram passengers in England outside of London. Starting to work in this new field, while continuing to deliver on rail passenger issues in England, Scotland and Wales, represents a considerable challenge. We will gradually build up our capacity and capability on bus issues. This work will be ring-fenced in 2009, but we will work towards a fully integrated organisation, with all staff working on rail and bus issues by 2011.

Our rail work is based on a solid base of passenger research into what passengers think about current services and their priorities for improvement. The keystone to this is the National Passenger Survey. Every year over 54,000 passengers participate and the survey has become the standard benchmark of industry performance. We will continue to ensure that fares and ticketing issues, and in particular value for money, are at the centre of debate. We have used research to secure a better position for passengers in the franchise specification process. Passenger Focus has been heavily involved in helping the Department for Transport (DfT) set out the specification for the South Central franchise. Passenger priorities have become pivotal to Network Rail's important Route Utilisation Strategies. We hope these and others involvement will continue. Change has been secured on the ground by our team of nationwide passenger link managers and effective national lobbying.

We do not have this base for our bus work. However, building it up will be a priority. We are taking on the national bus passenger satisfaction and mystery traveller survey, currently published by DfT. We are developing a method of pairing similar areas and carrying out in depth bus user satisfaction surveys. We are starting to carry out bespoke research on areas such as concessionary fares and complaints handling. Over time we will build a better picture of bus passenger needs. We are going to trial how we can make sure we remain a national organisation but with effective regional reach – building on our existing passenger link team and effective partnerships will allow us to do this. This increase in knowledge will inform future business plans and allow us to be more precise about what we are trying to achieve.

This plan is deliberately simple and short. Trying to plan in the current economic climate is difficult. Priorities and pressures may mean that work plans must change. However, detailed annual

business plans will set out more information about exactly what Passenger Focus is trying to achieve and how we will do it. We will measure the influence of Passenger Focus every other year.

This plan has been built around needs and priorities as expressed by the 80,000 plus rail passengers we talk to each year and the bus, coach and tram passengers we are going to start to represent. Passenger Focus will continue to ensure that government and the transport industry put passengers first.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Johnson', written in a cursive style.



## 2. About Passenger Focus

### Vision

The operators, funders, and regulators of transport systems **put passengers first**

### Mission

**Getting the best deal for passengers**

### Values

In order to make a difference for passengers, we need to ensure that we are recognised as being forward-thinking, proactive, and enabling. This will be realised through our four core values, which we try to demonstrate throughout our work:

- **independent** – we will be impartial, objective and fair in all our activities
- **credible** – our work will be evidence based
- **inclusive** – we seek to represent all the passengers covered by our remit
- **influential**– in order to deliver change, we will **constructively and energetically engage** with public bodies and private operators on behalf of passengers and other stakeholders.

### Priorities

Passenger Focus is a relatively small organisation. We make work priority choices based on passengers priorities and resources.

In developing our choices for work priorities we ask:

- Is the issue of direct concern to passengers?
- How many passengers will be affected?
- Will addressing the issue improve the service and / or deliver significant improvements to the passenger experience?
- Do we have the resources to deal with the issue?
- Are we best placed to focus on the subject?
- Is the issue within our remit?

Our annual business plans permit us to alter priorities and resources to meet changes in circumstances as they emerge.



## Priority 1 – Making a difference for all passengers

### Who benefits from making this a priority?

- All passengers using trains, buses, coaches and trams

### What are the key issues?

### What results are we looking to achieve?

#### Rail

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1.1 Performance and safety        | Punctuality and reliability continue to improve across an increasingly safe network  |
| 1.2 Fares and value for money     | The fares and ticketing system is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• easier to understand</li><li>• easier to use; and</li><li>• all increases in fare levels are fully justified</li></ul>  |
| 1.3 Capacity                      | Final proposals for route utilisation strategies, franchise replacements and other schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• clearly identify capacity constraints</li><li>• create sufficient capacity to address the identified need, or</li><li>• clearly acknowledge and explain, if funding limitations preclude ideal solutions</li></ul> |
| 1.4 Delays and planned disruption | The rail industry improves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the way information is communicated to passengers</li><li>• the way it manages disruption to passengers including compensation paid</li></ul>  |

#### Bus, coach and tram

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1.0 Bus, coach and tram passengers | The needs and aspirations of bus, coach and tram passengers are thoroughly understood and prioritised for action |
|------------------------------------|--|

1.2 End to end journeys The passenger transport industry provides simpler end to end journeys and clearly understands passenger issues in respect of each part of the journey for all types of passenger.

### **What does success look like for Passenger Focus?**

We will ask service providers, Network Rail and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers”

Annual business plans will set out a range of specific objectives and activities linked to the broad themes of this plan.



## Priority 2 – Tackle examples of very poor passenger service

### Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Passengers generally, but particularly those that experience very poor levels of service

### What are the key issues?

- Ensuring examples of poor consumer service are identified and prioritised for action. Decision-makers are aware of these issues and are addressing these particular areas of poor passenger service

### What does success for Passenger Focus look like?

- The poor service driving satisfaction ratings is being addressed



## Priority 3 – Improve access to services for passengers with particular needs

### Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Those groups of passengers for whom access to services is inadequate

### What are the key issues?

- Understanding which groups of passengers face systematic barriers to access to services
- Access to services for disabled persons

### What does success for Passenger Focus look like?

- Barriers to access are identified and prioritised





**Priority 4 – Promote good practice in complaint handling and provide advice and advocacy to complainants**

**Who benefits from making this a priority?**

- Passengers with complaints

**What are the key issues?**

- Driving up industry complaint handling performance
- Providing advice and advocacy to those whose complaints have not been satisfactorily resolved by rail service providers

**What does success for Passenger Focus look like?**

- Levels of satisfaction with the way in which Passenger Focus handled rail related complaints rises to 70% (base 2008-9 65%)



**Priority 5 – Increase awareness of Passenger Focus and our influence with stakeholders**

**Who benefits from making this a priority?**

- Passengers benefit from Passenger Focus being visible, accessible and understood

**What are the key issues?**

- Passenger Focus's role is to improve service provision throughout the industry. To achieve this, it must first of all be visible, accessible and understood as the voice of the passenger

**What does success look like?**

- Those passengers who need to contact Passenger Focus find it easy to do so
- Passenger Focus is recognised by the media as the authoritative passenger champion



## Priority 6 – Build and deliver effective passenger representation for bus and coach passengers

### Who benefits from making this a priority?

- Bus and coach passengers in England (outside London)

### What are the key issues?

- Development of our role as a bus passenger champion in England and ensuring we continue to deliver in all aspects of our rail role and work
- Research to measure passenger satisfaction and priorities for change is trialled and established. This will include understanding the key reasons underlying satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Research on key individual issues, such as information, will be carried out

### What does success look like?

- We will ask service providers, and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?”

- Research programme established and accepted by stakeholders
- Passenger Focus has influenced national policy debates
- Effective regional representation of bus passengers has commenced

<b>Priority 7 – Boosting Passenger Focus’ capacity and capability to get the best deal for passengers</b>
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**Who benefits from making this a priority?**

- Ultimately, passengers benefit as a result of us delivering an effective organisation

**What are the key issues?**

- Ensuring that we have people with the right skills, knowledge and attitude, as well as budget, facilities and resources in place to deliver for passengers, including flexibility to respond to emerging issues for passengers
- Ensuring we deliver value for money and a high standard of performance in our work
- Providing a range of methods and opportunities to maintain regular communication between all staff based across two sites and peripatetically and with our Board
- With a large team based outside the main office environments, it is essential that those staff have the support and opportunities to share knowledge and best practice

**What does success look like?**

- We maintain an organisation of motivated and supported staff that achieve our goals
- We deliver our plans within the agreed budget allocations
- Our corporate governance enables effective scrutiny and accountability for expenditure and performance
- All staff feel they are kept up-to-date with events in the industry and each other’s work and know how to contribute to internal communication
- Home-based workers feel part of the team, with effective support that pulls together their knowledge and expertise and makes it available for everyone to access and use

## **Annex A – Measuring and tracking our performance**

### **Passenger Focus will:**

- Publish annual reports on performance, activities and expenditure
- Every other year we will ask service providers, Network Rail and those other organisations Passenger Focus seeks to influence every other year:

“How influential has Passenger Focus been in helping you to understand, prioritise and act on passenger experiences and needs?”

“How much impact has Passenger Focus had in making a difference for passengers?”

This stakeholder survey will probe how Passenger Focus's values of independence, credibility, inclusiveness and influence are being demonstrated in practice by carrying out a number of in-depth interviews with key government and industry figures. All those asked can reply anonymously ensuring a high degree of objectivity in the responses.

- Draw up annual business plans detailing the work we will do to address the six strategic priorities identified in this plan and the five key areas of performance, fares and value for money, capacity, end to end journeys and delays and disruption
- Report four times a year at public Board meetings on progress towards meeting targets, including reports on our work with individual train companies
- Levels of passenger satisfaction with Passenger Focus's handling of their complaints rises to 70% from current annual average of 65%

## Internal success measures

### Strategic priority: **internal control**

budget and audit

Aim to ensure all internal audit assignments (as approved by the audit committee) return no less than a 'substantial assurance' opinion

Ensure annual audit opinion of Comptroller & Auditor General is unqualified

Manage budget allocations in total and by cost centre to within +/- 5% in Q1-3 and +/- 1% in Q4

unplanned absence

Maintain unplanned absence levels across the organisation below national average (2008 baseline: 4.3%; Passenger Focus 3.0%)

diversity

Promote workplace diversity through an annual review of our statutory equality scheme(s)

## Annex B – Statutory duties

Rail Passengers Council is our legal name, and the Railways Act 2005 and the Railways Act 1993 as amended by the Transport Act 2000 detail our duties and powers. We operate under the name Passenger Focus. We are an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the Department for Transport.

On 24 April 2008, the then Secretary of State delivered the keynote address at the annual Passenger Focus conference. She said:

*“And as many of you will know, we have recently extended the remit of Passenger Focus to act as a champion for bus passengers in addition to rail. The result is that Passenger Focus will be representing two forms of transport that together account for seven billion journeys a year. That's good news for rail passengers and bus passengers. And it will mean that we can develop a deeper appreciation of the passenger experience not just on trains, but across other means of transport as well. In the real world, journeys usually involve two or more forms of travel - but in the past we haven't taken this into account often enough.”*

The Local Transport Act 2008 has now provided the additional powers for the Secretary of State to confer non-rail functions on Passenger Focus. A consultation on the terms of the draft Order is expected during 2009.

Our statutory responsibilities for rail include

- investigating any matters that relates to the provision of
  - railway passenger services
  - station services by a licensed station operator
- investigating representation made by a user of the railway (including passenger appeal complaint handling)
- referring any breach (or likely breach) of a franchise agreement or passenger/station licence to the Office of Rail Regulation
- referring any matter that has not been resolved to our satisfaction to the Department for Transport
- keeping under review any matters affecting the interest of the public in relation to railway services
- co-operating with other bodies representing the interests of users of public transport services
- producing an annual report
- holding two public meetings each year.

## **Annex C – Organisation and governance**

## Annex D – Resources

£000'S  
Cost Type  
Total

Budgets for 2010-11		
Total	Bus	Rail
8,201	2,250	5,951

